



Harbinger

March and April 2010 VOL 24 NO 2

ECONOMIC REALITIES

A Reduction in Nature Center Hours

March 1 has marked the beginning of new hours at the nature center for the past decade. It's the time of year when area and trail hours are extended to accommodate more visitors due to warmer temperatures and longer days as spring arrives. This year is no exception; our daily area hours will extend, but the days of the week we are open will decrease.

Like all other state agencies and many businesses, we, too, are affected by the downtrend in the economy. Effective March 1, area and trail hours will be shortened by one hour, closing at 8pm instead of 9pm from March 1 through October 31. The area and trails will also be closed Sunday mornings until noon. The building will be closed on Sunday mornings and on Mondays during this same time frame. Nothing will change regarding the building's Tuesday through Saturday operating hours.

During our winter hours, from November 1 through February 29, the area and trails will be open from 8am to 6pm Monday through Saturday and from noon to 6pm on Sundays. The building will be closed all day on Sundays and Mondays during this time frame.

As for holidays, besides being closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, the nature center building, trails, and area will also close on Independence Day and other state holidays that fall on a Monday. (See the sidebar for complete information.)

These cutbacks are part of the Missouri Department of Conservation's statewide plan to reduce expenses by \$7.5 million. Other agency cutbacks include holding 173 positions vacant (which equates to more than 10 percent of the agency's workforce), closing 13 office facilities, and reducing hours of operation at the other 5 Conservation Nature Centers scattered across the state. The reason for these cutbacks is that revenues from the conservation sales tax and hunting and fishing permit sales—our two largest revenue sources—have not kept pace with inflation.

We've lost several positions which have caused us to cut hours of operation. Knowing the trails are heavily used and very popular, we made every effort to keep the area and trails open as much as possible. We were given special consideration having to only close the area and trails on Sunday mornings and a few additional holidays. Please help us by respecting the area hours and not visiting when we are officially closed.

Conservation is wise use of our resources, and our financial resources are limited. Forging a compromise between financial reality and public service is the goal of our new hours. Every effort was made to accommodate the public as much as possible within our current financial parameters. And as in nature, everything is connected—including conservation and the economy.

New Nature Center **BUILDING** hours

(Beginning March 1)

MARCH 1–OCTOBER 31

8am to 5pm Tuesday–Saturday
Noon–5pm Sunday
Closed Monday

NOVEMBER 1–FEBRUARY 29

8am to 5pm Tuesday–Saturday
Closed Sunday & Monday

New Nature Center **AREA & TRAIL** hours

(Beginning March 1)

MARCH 1–OCTOBER 31

8am to 8pm Monday–Saturday
Noon–8pm Sunday

NOVEMBER 1–FEBRUARY 29

8am to 6pm Monday–Saturday
Noon–6pm Sunday

HOLIDAY Closings

The nature center building, trails and area will be closed on New Year's Day; Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Washington's Birthday; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Thanksgiving; Christmas; and other state holidays that fall on a Monday.

The View From The Bridge

Volunteers have been a part of the nature center since we opened 21 years ago. In fact, 3 volunteers have been with us since our inauguration and their cumulative contribution is more than 8,351 hours. We have always relied on volunteers, and with the current decrease in staffing and budgets, now their contributions are more important than ever.

Volunteers are recognized nationally each year during *National Volunteer Week* (April 18-24, 2010). While we praise their contributions every opportunity we have, we want to give them special recognition now.

We currently have 64 trained Volunteer Naturalists who help with everyday operations including staffing the front desk, walking the trails, assisting with programs, and doing a variety of behind-the-scenes duties. Last year, these volunteers contributed more than 9,000 hours which is equivalent to approximately 4½ salaried employees. An average of 51 Volunteer Naturalists contributed hours each month averaging 15 hours each. They either presented or contributed significantly toward presenting 155 programs that many of you attended last year.

Another significant contribution comes from unintentional volunteers—those who are court-appointed to donate hours to their community. A monthly average of 18 CASP (Community Alternative Sentencing Program) volunteers contributed a total of 5,310 hours of supervised building and area maintenance last year—an equivalent of 2½ salaried employees.

A number of volunteer guest speakers and demonstrators including members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarvers, Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers, Missouri Trout Fishermen's Association, Greater Ozarks Audubon Society, and others also contributed time to staff booths during special events or to present programs.

Fewer in number, but critically important, are the specially trained and certified Hunter Education Volunteers who help present 9 *Hunter Education* classes annually. Besides some of our Volunteer Naturalists who are also certified to teach, Jay Short and Joe Wooderson helped teach most of these 10-hour courses last year.

Scouts, youth and church groups, and families who occasionally helped with special projects also contributed to the grand total of 1,145 volunteers contributing more than 15,000 hours last year.

Volunteers contribute expertise, time, energy, and enthusiasm which helps us better fulfill our mission of "helping Missourians connect with nature and conserve it too." Please take time to thank the volunteers in your life as well as the ones that serve you at your conservation nature center.


Linda F. Chorice
Nature Center Manager

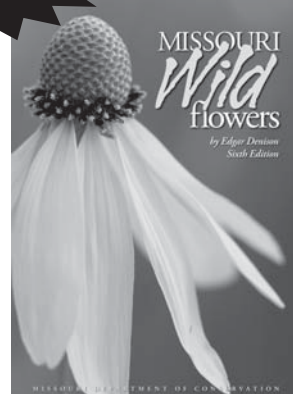
The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). From March 1 to October 31, the area and trails are open daily 8am to 8pm Monday–Saturday and Noon–8pm Sunday. The building is closed Monday and open 8am to 5pm Tuesday–Saturday and Noon–5pm Sunday. During this time frame, the building, trails, and area will be closed on Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Columbus Day. The area is closed to pets, bicycles, roller blades, hunting, fishing, collecting, and alcoholic beverages. No fees are charged.

Phone: 417/888-4237 Fax: 417/888-4241 <www.mdc.mo.gov/2360>

The Nature Nook Gift Shop

20% Off

MARCH
AND APRIL
FEATURED
PUBLICATION



Missouri Wildflowers

Discounted price: \$9.60 plus tax

Heritage card discount does not apply.

Thank You

We would like to thank Penny Gutscher and Mark B. Deckard for donating natural objects, Jeannette Erter for the children's books, and Diane Ewing for birdseed.

Temporary Display

March

Ozark Scenes Photography

Photography by Scott Faught

April

Wildflowers of Ozark
Woodlands, Prairies, and Glades

Photography by Dr. Stephen Timme

Newsletter Online

Thanks to everyone who has registered to receive the newsletter online. If you'd like to start receiving your newsletter through the web, sign up at <www.mdc.mo.gov/2360>.

Ask The Naturalist



Seasonal changes spark many questions. In this section, we answer some common questions about natural events.

Why do birds migrate in the spring?

There is a lot of study being done on bird migration and there are still many things to learn. In the spring, birds migrate to Missouri and points northward to find adequate food and locations where there may be less nest predation and competition for resources.

There is a bird at my feeder that is the size of a robin but is black and white with a bright red patch on its breast. What is it?

The bird is a male rose-breasted grosbeak. A neotropical migrant, they travel through the Ozarks in late April or early May, stopping at feeders on the way to their summer nesting grounds. Rose-breasted grosbeaks spend the winter in Mexico or as far south as Colombia and Venezuela. While rare in the Ozarks during the summer, they are a common summer resident in northern Missouri.

Which kinds of orioles visit the Ozarks?

There are two species of orioles that can be found in the Ozarks during the spring and summer. Both species arrive in Missouri in mid- to late-April. Baltimore oriole males and orchard oriole males are very similar in appearance. Baltimore orioles have a bright orange to yellow breast while orchard orioles have a more chestnut appearance to their breast plumage.

Chipping In . . . Volunteer Naturalist

Teddy Heaton

Fast Facts:

Volunteer 1994 to 1996; rejoined in 2005

Hours Donated: 552 hours

Occupation: financial advisor

Education: B.S. in wildlife conservation from Missouri State University and pursuing a M.B.A. at Missouri State University

Nature Center Activities: instructing *Hunter Education* classes, helping scouts earn merit badge requirements, and assisting with other programs.



I volunteer because: I was blessed to be raised in a family that spent much of its time in the outdoors and wilderness. I understand that many kids don't get that opportunity in today's society, so I like to share my experiences with them and give kids exposure to what nature has to offer.

The most fulfilling part of working as a Volunteer Naturalist is: the friendships that I have developed here and the opportunity to interact with other volunteers who value both community service and nature.

One thing most people don't know about me is: that I love N scale model railroading.

When I was young, a natural experience that influenced me: occurred during a family camping trip. My cousin and I were sent to retrieve firewood from a woodpile where we uncovered a black rat snake. We both ran and yelled "Snake!" all the way back to camp. Mom took us by the hand and calmly walked us straight back to that woodpile and proceeded to tell us everything there was to know about snakes.

I am inspired by: the wisdom our forefathers had when they created wildlife laws that revolved around conservation rather than preservation. This set the stage for us to have one of the best camping, hunting, fishing, and all-around outdoor activity states in the nation.

One place where I have always wanted to go is: Australia because of all the diverse ecosystems.

My favorite volunteer memory occurred: during a *Summer Hummers* program where Sarah Driver captured and banded delicate, but feisty, little hummingbirds.

My favorite natural place to visit in Missouri is: any of the wild trout streams.

When I am not volunteering, you can find me: serving as a scout master for Springfield's special needs Boy Scout Troop #2. So, if you know anyone interested in being part of this troop, please send them my way.

Volunteer Milestones

Bob McCoy1250 Hours
Judith Armstrong200 Hours
Jonova Robinson100 Hours

Congratulations . . .

to *Naturalist Alan Reed* for being named Missouri Conservation Department employee Hunter Education Instructor of the Year!

Harbinger

Springfield Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
4601 S. Nature Center Way
Springfield, MO 65804-4920
Phone 417/888-4237
Fax: 417/888-4241



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Please note new nature center street address

Naturescaping Symposium and Native Plant Sale

Saturday, April 3
9am–4pm

Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. A series of guest speakers will share the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale. Call to receive a flier listing the day's activities. No registration required.



March Events

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after **March 2** to register for March programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

**Registration begins
Tuesday, March 2**
unless otherwise noted

4 Discover Nature Families Turkey Hunting For Beginners

Thursday, 6:30–8pm



Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

Spring turkey season is almost here. Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to practice your turkey calling, to learn about spring turkey hunting season, and to take home some tips on how to be safe and successful in the woods this spring. Ages 6 and above with an adult mentor. *Registration begins February 22.*

6 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm

Explore a portion of the Mark Twain National Forest near Chadwick with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and rated moderate to difficult. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Attention Hikers And Trekkers: Because of program popularity and to accommodate newcomers to hiking programs, you are invited to attend a social on March 18 from 8–9pm after the *Ozark Day Hiking and Backpacking* program. You'll have the opportunity to network with other hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Share your knowledge about places to hike and personal contact information with other hikers if you so desire.

10 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

11 Parents As Teachers Story Time

Thursday, 9:30am, 10:30am, or 11:30am

Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a "Nature At Its Best" story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

12 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

**Videos are shown
every Sunday
from 2–3pm.**

13 The Art Of Woodcarving

Saturday, 10–11am

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they teach carving techniques and show how to transform wood into works of art. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

Woodcarving Demonstration

Saturday, 10am–4pm

Drop by anytime to visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the "wood-be" carver, demonstrate carving techniques, show works in progress, and sell some of their art pieces. All ages.

Virtual Hunting And Fishing

Saturday, 1–3pm

Attention hunters, anglers, and video game buffs!

Here's your chance to try your hand at virtual hunting and fishing. While a video game can never take the place of a real experience, these simulators are sure to stimulate you to take a trip outdoors. Ages 5–adult.

18 Babes In The Woods

Thursday, 11–11:45am

Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0–2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

Ozark Day Hiking And Backpacking Trips And Tips

Thursday, 6:30–8pm

Tom Swift and Brent Elliott, authors of *Ozark Mountain Walk-A-Bout–Trails, Trivia, Trips and Tips*, will present information on hiking and backpacking the beautiful Ozarks. They will talk about natural areas that are within three hours of Springfield, ideal gear choices for the Ozarks, and plenty of hiking tips. A book sale and signing will follow the program. Ages 12–adult. Registration required.

Attention Hikers And Trekkers: Because of program popularity and to accommodate newcomers to hiking programs, you are invited to attend a social after tonight's program from 8–9pm. You'll have the opportunity to network with other hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Share your knowledge about places to hike, the experiences you have had, and personal contact information with other hikers if you so desire. Drinks and snacks provided.

20 Babes In The Woods

Saturday, 11–11:45am

Spring is in the air as we go on a guided nature stroll to rejuvenate you and your favorite 0–2 year old. Bring a stroller. Registration required.

24 Toddler Tales

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Bring your tots to hear a special tale about nature and to complete a craft project.

25 Badge Bonanza

Thursday, 6:30–8pm

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! Here's a program to help you earn nature badges. The focus will be Missouri animals, including vertebrates, animal characteristics, food chains, habitats, and more. Activities are also open to the public. All ages. Registration required.

27 For Adults Only GPS For Beginners

Saturday, 9am–Noon

Hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have become more affordable and popular. If you're still in the dark about what GPS devices are or if you want to buy one but need more information, this program is for you. Join Corps of Engineers GIS Specialist Tricia Tannehill as she explains how to use Garmin GPS units which will be provided. This will be a hands-on course, so dress for an outdoor hike. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Conservation TEEN Club GPS And Geocaching

Saturday, 1–5pm

Hand-held Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have become more affordable and popular. If you're still in the dark about what GPS devices are or if you want to buy one but need more information, this program is for you. Join Corps of Engineers GIS Specialist Tricia Tannehill as she explains how to use Garmin GPS units which will be provided. This will be a hands-on course. Geocaching will be part of the afternoon activities so dress for an outdoor hike. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

30 Conservation Kids' Club Flower Power

Tuesday, 6:30–7:45pm

Wildflowers are more than pretty things for us to enjoy. They have an important job to perform—making seeds! Come learn the secrets of Missouri's spring wildflowers at this month's meeting. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **LITTLE ACORNS** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Salamander Slide

Meet the salamander family! We'll investigate some of their special features and find out why salamanders aren't lizards.

Friday, March 5, 11am or 1:30pm
Saturday, March 6, 11am

Spring Has Sprung

Come hear a special story about some nature center residents as they wake up to spring!

Tuesday, March 9, 11am or 1:30pm

Spring Peepers

It's time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny spring peeper.

Saturday, March 20, 11am
Friday, March 26, 11am or 1:30pm



April Events

SPRINGFIELD CONSERVATION NATURE CENTER

Call the nature center at 417/888-4237 on or after **April 1** to register for April programs requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call to cancel so that someone on the waiting list may attend.

**Registration begins
Thursday, April 1**
unless otherwise noted

3 Naturescaping Symposium And Native Plant Sale

Saturday, 9am–4pm

Naturescaping emphasizes landscaping with native plant species providing urban habitat for a diversity of wildlife and offering alternatives to the traditional water- and chemical-dependent manicured lawn. A series of guest speakers will share the benefits of incorporating native plants into your landscape. The day will also include exhibitors and a plant sale. *Call to receive a flier listing the day's activities.*

10 Hiking Club

Saturday, 8:30am–5pm

Join Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam for a day of exploring. Meet at the nature center and carpool to Swan Creek Territory. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is approximately five miles and of moderate difficulty. Ages 18–adult. Registration required.

Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

Saturday, 10am–4pm

Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

11 Primitive Skills Series Useful Plant Hike

Sunday, 1–3pm

Plants have always been important to humans. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explore the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants. Ages 15–adult. Registration required.

14 Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

Wednesday, 11–11:30am

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

15 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

Thursday, 11–11:45pm

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Enjoy nature with the younger generation, children 0–2, on this special stroller walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

**Videos are shown
every Sunday
from 2–3pm.**

16 Hunter Education

Friday, 6–9pm and Saturday, 8am–5pm

This 10-hour course is required for anyone born after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. The course is continued Saturday, 8am to 5pm. You must pass a written test to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. Bring a heritage card or any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permit if you have any of these. Ages 11–adult. *Call today to register.*

17 Babes In The Woods Celebrates Earth Day

Saturday, 11–11:45pm

Take a stroll for Earth Day. Enjoy nature with the younger generation, children 0–2, on this special stroller walk to celebrate our planet. Registration required.

Discover Nature Women Morel Hunting

Saturday, 8am–Noon



Add a morel hunt to your outdoor activities this month. We will spend about thirty minutes indoors discussing morel

mushroom identification, when to search for them, and places to look for these tasty treats. Then we will carpool to a location or two in search of morels. Dress for the weather. Bring water, a basket, and wear comfortable hiking shoes. This program is for women only. Girls, ages 12–17, are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult female. Registration required.

Discover Nature Families Spring Hike

Saturday, 1–4pm



Discover Nature Families programs are designed to help adults and children explore nature and master outdoor skills together.

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) and enjoy a naturalist-guided spring hike at Busiek State Forest and Wildlife Area. You'll learn about the plants and animals that inhabit the forest as well as how to hike safely. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike will be approximately three miles and is of moderate difficulty. Ages 8 and above with an adult mentor. Registration required.

22 Badge Bonanza

Thursday, 6:30–8pm

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! Here's a program to help you earn nature badges. The focus will be on venomous animals, conservation careers, and knot tying. Activities are also open to the public. All ages. Registration required.

LITTLE ACORNS

LITTLE ACORNS programs are for children 3–6 years and are 45-minutes in length. Please limit **LITTLE ACORNS** programs to one per month. Registration required.

Hooray For Hummingbirds

Preschoolers, give a cheer to welcome the ruby-throated hummingbirds back as they return to the Ozarks. Catch the excitement of learning about these jewels of the bird world.

Wednesday, April 7, 11am or 1:30pm

Cottontail Tales

Come have a hoppin' good time as you learn about the life story of this familiar Missouri resident.

Friday, April 9, 11am or 1:30pm

Saturday, April 10, 11am

Tots And Toads

Missouri toads are colorful, harmless, vocal, and valuable. We'll have fun learning about these cool creatures.

Tuesday, April 13, 11am or 1:30pm

24 Conservation TEEN Club Pond Fishing And Hike

Saturday, 9am–4pm

Springtime in the Ozarks means fishing! Come and have a great time chasing lunkers and hiking to the wetland area at the Walter Woods Conservation Area. Fishing will be catch-and-release and participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Wear comfortable hiking boots and dress for the weather. Lunch and transportation will be provided. Ages 12–17. Registration required.

27 Conservation Kids' Club April Foolery

Tuesday, 6:30–7:45pm

Join us for an evening of fun as we solve wacky wildlife mysteries and find out that the truth can be stranger than fiction. Ages 7–12. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids. Registration required.

Change of Address

The nature center has a new mailing address:
Springfield Conservation Nature Center
4601 S. Nature Center Way
Springfield, MO 65804-4920